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SUBJECT: UPDATE FOR SENEGAL: WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

REF: A. STATE 184972

[1](#)B. 05 DAKAR 2137

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[1](#)1. On August 11, 2006, post provided comments on the final draft text of the U.S. Department of Labor's 2005 Worst Forms of Child Labor Report for Senegal, which included earlier Post input (Ref B). The situation in Senegal has changed little since August. The following information is keyed to Ref A request to update the 2005 report.

A) LAWS AND REGULATIONS PROSCRIBING THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

[1](#)2. Since the publication of the DOL's 2005 Worst Forms of Child Labor Report for Senegal, the Government of President Abdoulaye Wade has not passed additional laws or regulations governing child labor. In 2005, Senegal's National Assembly passed a law against trafficking. Senegal, therefore, has in place adequate legal authority to enforce child labor laws and to monitor and prosecute abusers. Traffickers, who are facilitating illegal immigration to Europe, are being prosecuted under this legislation. On December 6, Ambassador John Miller (G/TIP) participated in a Digital Video Conference that concluded a day-long public awareness program on the new law and trafficking in and through Senegal.

B) REGULATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND ENFORCEMENT OF PROSCRIPTIONS AGAINST THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

[1](#)3. Senegal's laws and regulations continue to require additional harmonization to effectively combat the worst forms of child labor. For example, education is compulsory until the age of sixteen for all children, however, at age 15, children are legally allowed to work.

[1](#)4. The Ministry of Labor implements and enforces child labor laws and regulations. Its Labor Inspectors are responsible for investigating and initiating lawsuits in child labor cases. They have the authority to visit any factory or shop to verify and investigate compliance with labor laws. However, this office is understaffed and under-funded, and monitoring, especially in the informal sector, continues to be weak. The majority of investigations initiated by Labor Inspectors are initiated after reports of violations raised by unions or after denunciations by other companies.

[1](#)5. Overall, the level of resources the GOS devotes to investigating child labor cases is insufficient. Sources from the Ministry of Labor indicated that there are an estimated 50 Labor Inspectors in Senegal of whom only 5 to 10 deal with child labor issues. Post knows of no cases in which criminal penalties or civil fines have actually been imposed for child labor violations in Senegal.

C) WHETHER THERE ARE SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO PREVENT AND WITHDRAW CHILDREN FROM THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

¶16. On October 10, 2006, a special "Presidential Council on Street Children" recommended the creation of an ambitious new partnership ("One Child, One Family") that includes the Government, the World Bank, NGOs, religious leaders, and donors to protect and withdraw children from the street. The goal is to provide the children with a foster family environment and confirm they are actually receiving an education. The Council also asked for improvements in law enforcement and in the educational system to help remove children from the streets. In a December 2006 publication, the World Bank estimated that more than 100,000 children (from ages 2 to 15) beg on the streets of Dakar. [NOTE: the World Bank has proposed a comprehensive survey of child beggars but the program is not yet funded. END NOTE.]

D) DOES THE COUNTRY HAVE A COMPREHENSIVE POLICY AIMED AT THE ELIMINATION OF THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR?

¶17. Following the recommendations of the World Summit for Children in 1989 Senegal established a National Committee, "National Committee for Children" to coordinate with NGOs fighting child labor. However, activities for most of these NGOs, except Plan International, are dependent on GOS funds, which are inadequate. An inter-ministerial committee, which includes the Ministry of Labor and the Ministry of Women, Family, Social Development and Women's Entrepreneurship, is in place to coordinate this program, which, at this time, covers only 6 of Senegal's 11 regions. Some regions like Ziguinchor, Kolda and Tambacounda, with significant levels of child trafficking and sexual exploitation are not included.

E) IS THE COUNTRY MAKING CONTINUAL PROGRESS TOWARD ELIMINATING THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR?

¶18. Senegal continues to make incremental progress in addressing the

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worst forms of child labor, but the problem persists. The GOS includes the elimination of the worst forms of child labor by 2015 as a policy priority in its overarching Poverty Reduction Strategy. Senegal's Department of Statistics and Economic Study, in conjunction with the ILO's Department of Statistics, is finalizing a major survey on the worst forms of child labor in Senegal. Scheduled to be released in early 2007, this report is designed to provide, for the first time in Senegal, comprehensive data on the child labor situation and how it has changed over the past year. [NOTE: Post will forward to the Department and DOL the results of this study as soon as they are available. END NOTE.]

¶19. Mr. Aliou Seck, ILO-IPEC coordinator for Senegal, told us that, as in FY 06, Senegal's FY 07 budget will include approximately USD 18 million for "child welfare" programs, including additional measures to address child labor issues in particular street children and beggars. At least some of this money should be available to examine fraudulent religious schools that are often a front for child begging, and to fund programs for the street children, underage domestic workers, and the sexual exploitation of children.

¶10. Seck is also pursuing a 2007 GOS-IPEC program to reinforce capacity building of judges and Labor Inspectors, improve Senegal's legal framework (such as the discrepancy between the legal age for ending school and beginning work), reinforce the campaign against exploiting child beggars, and improve the public awareness effort, particularly among Senegal's opinion leaders.

COMMENT

¶11. Despite the enhanced attention paid to child labor and trafficking, with an annual population growth rate of 2.5 percent, increasing demands on an already over-burdened education system (public, private, and religious), and a stagnant economy, there will be no quick solution for Senegal's child labor problems. The ILO's Seck told us recently that the establishing even a minimal program

to monitor the vast problem of child domestic workers is not even on
the GOS's radar screen. END COMMENT.

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